NANAIMO LADYSMITH PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Education Committee Meeting
Information Sheet

DATE: May 3, 2023
TO: Education Committee
FROM: Kerri Steel & Kirstin Funke Robinson – Directors of Instruction – Inclusive Education
SUBJECT: The Crisis Response Continuum

Board of Education Strategic Plan – Board Goal

Safe, caring and healthy learning and working environment that is inclusive of the diversity of our entire learning community.
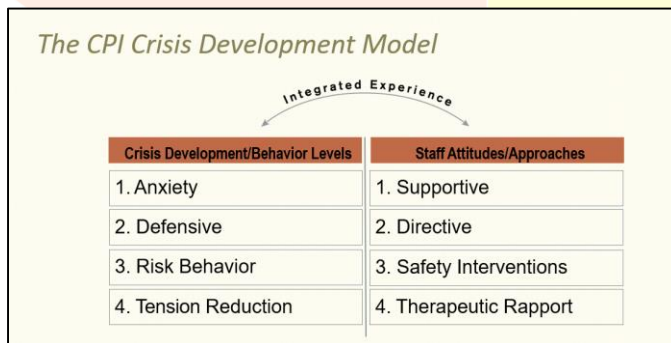
Objectives:
- *Increase the number of students who feel welcomed, safe, connected and have a sense of belonging in their school*
- *Increase the number of students who feel there are two or more adults at their school who care about them*
- *Increasing awareness and capacity in addressing mental health and wellness*

Background

The Crisis Response Continuum is the foundation of the Non-violent Crisis Intervention (NCI) framework developed by the Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI). This framework illustrates the progression of behaviours on the anxiety continuum that may indicate an individual is in distress or may pose as a risk to themselves or others.

The NCI framework is foundational to the supportive plans and data-collection tools utilized for students in NLPS (e.g., Regulation Support Plans, Employee Safety Plans, Integration Plans). The model is based on the knowledge that all behaviour is a form of communication and understanding what is causing the behaviour allows us to intervene with the appropriate supportive response.

The CPI Crisis Development Model

Integrated Experience

Crisis Development/Behavior Levels	Staff Attitudes/Approaches
1. Anxiety	1. Supportive
2. Defensive	2. Directive
3. Risk Behavior	3. Safety Interventions
4. Tension Reduction	4. Therapeutic Rapport

1. <u>Anxiety:</u> is a common risk behaviour that may manifest as work refusal, pacing the classroom or scribbling on work, as examples. Responses involve recognizing and validating the individuals' feelings and providing support to assist them in feeling calm and in control (e.g. offering a break or increasing the use of visuals).
2. <u>Defensiveness:</u> occurs when an individual experiences a real or perceived threat in their environment. Students may begin to yell or throw items in the classroom. They sometimes elope from the classroom or school. Responses include reducing verbal language, and implementing specific strategies to defuse the situation and communicate understanding (e.g. increasing proximity and reducing our language, offering a fast finish to the task and transitioning to a preferred activity)
3. <u>Risk behaviours:</u> behaviours that pose a significant risk to the student or others. Staff are trained to utilize responses which prioritize safety and minimize harm. Students may bite, hit, or kick at others. They may throw items or shove furniture toward an individual. Where we see there is a high likelihood of an intense, sustained event, we implement safety interventions. This involves reducing proximity (supervising from a distance), evacuating the space, and disengaging from verbal instructions. In many cases, additional, student-specific training is provided for the team working with the student.
4. <u>Tension reduction:</u> Staff work to create a calm and supportive environment that promotes self-soothing and self-regulation. At this point, students typically experience a decrease in physical and emotional energy. Some will sleep, most will want a quiet space to regroup with a preferred activity. A key aspect of this stage is reestablishing the relationship and therapeutic rapport with the student.

Developing plans that reflect the principles in this framework involves consideration of data from a variety of sources: observational data collected by the school team, consultation with families and outside care providers, assessment recommendations, and information from students. There are times when information is also gleaned through other mechanisms, such as a student satisfaction survey or an ERASE bullying report.

Post-event, we utilize the COPING Model to assist staff in processing their own experiences, as well as reconfirming the plans in place are both appropriate and supportive.   Sometimes this leads to additional interventions, or a switch-up of support people, to ensure everyone is feeling safe and confident in their work.

The COPING Model

Control	Ensure emotional and physical control is regained.
Orient	Orient everyone to the basic facts (5 W's)
Patterns	Look for patterns in student & staff responses to the behaviour. Is this a new behaviour? What is the staff response history to this student?
Investigate	What are some alternatives we can offer to the student? What are some ways to strengthen staff response?
Negotiate	What are some future approaches we can negotiate/coach with the student? Reinforce what is working well and adjust future interventions.
Give	Offer support and encouragement. Express trust and confidence in student and staff capacity to respond to the next crisis.

The overarching goals of this approach are to promote safety, minimize harm, and create a sense of connection and trust between students and staff. Utilizing an evidence-based protocol such as the Crisis Response Continuum from NCI as a framework for our plans aligns our language and approaches across the system and allows for comprehensive training and support for the staff who work with our most vulnerable students.

2
Safe, caring, healthy learning and working environment that is inclusive of the diversity of our learning community

1
Continuous improvement of instruction and assessment

3
To be a leader in environmental stewardship and sustainability

4
Truth and Reconciliation